

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LUBUMB 00206 091042Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-08 COME-00 TRSE-00 OPIC-03 AID-05
XMB-02 INT-05 DOEE-00 SOE-02 PA-01 USIA-06
CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 L-03 SS-15 NSC-05
SP-02 ARA-10 EUR-12 GSA-02 /102 W
-----030454 091139Z /14

P 091022Z MAR 78
FM AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2326
INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652 N/A
TAGS: EMIN, CG
SUBJECT: REPORTED PLANS FOR CUTBACK COPPER PRODUCTION

REF: (A) STATE 56408, (B) KINSHASA 2174

1. ALL CONSULATE INQUIRIES TO GECAMINES OFFICIALS ON
PRODUCTION PLANS FOR 1978 HAVE GENERATED STATEMENTS SIMILAR
TO THOSE MENTIONED IN REFTEL B THAT 1978 PRODUCTION WILL
BE CLOSE TO 1977 PRODUCTION.

2. GECAMINES OFFICIALS, HOWEVER NOTED AT END OF JANUARY
AND AGAIN AT END OF FEBRUARY THAT PRODUCTION WAS OFF 5,000
MT FOR EACH MONTH. BLAME FOR 10,000 MT LOSS DURING FIRST
TWO MONTHS WAS PLACED ON SHORTAGES OF CRITICAL SPARE PARTS
THIS IS DIFFERENT FROM 1976 AND 1977 WHEN PRODUCTION LOSSES
WERE ATTRIBUTED TO SHORTAGES OF COKE AND COAL. RAILROAD
STATISTICS ON GECAMINES COPPER SHIPMENTS FROM SHABA
REMAINED NEAR NORMAL FOR JANUARY BUT FELL OFF TO ALL PORT
DESTINATIONS DURING FEBRUARY BY AN AVERAGE OF 25 PERCENT.

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PAGE 02 LUBUMB 00206 091042Z

3. AVERAGE GECAMINES MONTHLY PRODUCTION CAPACITY IS ABOUT
38,000 MT LOSS OF 5,000 MT PER MONTH WOULD
REPRESENT ABOUT 13 PC DROP IN PRODUCTION A FIGURE REASONABLY
CLOSE TO QUOTED 15 PC CUTBACK.

4. AFTER CIPEC MEETINGS IN JAKARTA DELEGATE GENERAL
UMBA SAID THAT CONSCIOUS PRODUCTION CUTBACK WOULD NOT

BE NECESSARY BECAUSE NORMAL SUPPLY AND TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS WOULD IMPOSE AUTOMATIC PRODUCTION LIMITATION. DESPITE SIMILAR TRANSPORTATION AND SUPPLY PROBLEMS THROUGHOUT 1977 PRODUCTION LEVELS REMAINED NEAR CAPACITY. FIRST SIGNS OF PROBLEMS DEVELOPED AFTER FIRST OF YEAR.

5. COMMENT. ALTHOUGH CONSULATE WOULD AGREE WITH EMBASSY ABOUT UNLIKELIHOOD THAT GOZ WOULD PERMIT PRODUCTION CUTBACKS CZAN FOREIGN EXCHANGE NEEDS PRODUCTION HAS OBVIOUSLY BEEN CURTAILED DURING FIRST TWO MONTHS WHILE SPARE PARTS HAVE BEEN A SERIOUS AND CONTINUING PROBLEM CONSCIOUS DECISION ON PRODUCTION CUTBACK UNDER USE OF SPARE PARTS SHORTAGES SHOULD NOT BE RULED OUT. SHABA'S PRODUCTION AND EXPORTS OF COPPER CAN

BE EXPECTED TO BE VERY SERIOUSLY CURTAILED SINCE GECAMINES RELIES ON RAILROAD TO THE SOUTH FOR IMPORTS OF AL MOST ALL ITS COAL, COKE, SULPHUR, AND EXPLOSIVES AND EXPORT OF NEARLY 40 PC OF ITS COPPER.

6. CONSULATE REGRETS INABILITY TO PROVIDE MORE TIMELY INPUT BUT OUR COMMUNICATIONS LINK WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD HAS BEEN DOWN BETWEEN FEBRUARY 25 TO MARCH 8. LEGIBLE COPIES OF REFTELS ONLY ARRIVED MARCH 9.

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PAGE 03 LUBUMB 00206 091042Z

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COPPER, PRODUCTION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LUBUMB00206
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780106-0197
Format: TEL
From: LUBUMBASHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780388/aaaacwnl.tel
Line Count: 94
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 32774cca-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 56408, 78 KINSHASA 2174
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3388883
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REPORTED PLANS FOR CUTBACK COPPER PRODUCTION
TAGS: EMIN, CG
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/32774cca-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014